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Don't squabble, PM tells Umno

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi will not resign as Kepala Batas member of parliament after he leaves office as prime minister next year.

Neither will he go on holiday as he strives to complete his reform programme in the five months remaining.

Abdullah, who is not seeking re-election as Umno president, had some advice for Umno leaders: "Don't fight, it's embarrassing."

He said this after launching the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia at the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) building yesterday.

Asked if he would hold some other government position after he stands down as prime minister, Abdullah, who was in a pleasant and jovial mood, said he would concentrate for the time being on what had to be done.

He listed five initiatives on Wednesday which he intended to see through.

He said he would table three bills in Parliament to strengthen the judiciary and anti-corruption enforcement, and increase the effectiveness and integrity of en-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says he will concentrate on what has to be done in the next few months

forcement agencies.

He also promised to enlarge the social safety net to ensure aid was given to all who needed it and to hold a Barisan Nasional convention to improve inter-racial and inter-religious relations.

Asked if he would be able to accomplish his initiatives, he an-

swered with a challenging "why not?"

"I have too much work to do, I won't take leave," he said when asked if he would follow in the footsteps of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was away for two months before vacating his post.

When asked if he feared that his policies of greater liberalisation and openness would be halted once he stepped down, Abdullah said there was nothing he could do about it.

"What do you expect me to do?" he said. However, he went on to say that he had always been a believer in freedom but that it "came with responsibility".

"There are those who tend to abuse the freedom."

Abdullah said there was no need to talk about how he was to be remembered.

"This is not my approach. My approach is to focus on what needs to be done today and for the future."

Asked to comment on the contest for the Umno deputy presidency, Abdullah said a good deputy would be one who ably assisted the president.

He also said he was confident the Islam Hadhari concept would be continued after he stepped down.